226 [87] After the drive through the dammed-off area, there are usually several fish remaining that succeeded in slipping through the chain. The women then take baskets and bail the pool dry, throwing the water over the dam.

Very often the women dam up part of a marsh or stream and bail out the water with baskets without setting traps or waiting for the water level to go down.

In all three cases we find: 1) setting the trap in front of the drain channel; 2) the drive in the dammed-up area; and 3) bailing out this section. The catch is divided equally among the women who participated in the work. [88]

These three methods of fishing prevail among all the riparian peoples of the Congo, Kasai, Fimi, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

On the upper Lukenie, starting with the Oshwe sector, no traps are made. At most the women occasionally dam up a section of the rivers and streams of the interior and bail them out with baskets to catch the fish.

226 The Ipanga, Batiru, Bokala, and Yaelima do not fish at all. They are people of the forest and not of the water. Hunting is their chief occupation, and fishing is unknown to them.

In this connection, these tribes are wholly distinct from their neighbors to the west. It must be noted, however, that even among the latter all the clans do not engage in fishing. The groups of the interior do not fish any more than their brothers of the sector of Oshwe and Bumbuli. The traps and other contrivances which we shall discuss below are unknown to both groups. In this respect, all these peoples have a common characteristic, recalling their common origin. In the lower Lukenie and farther west, however, part of the population, the Bandzali, "people of the water," have adapted themselves to the new conditions of their environment. The river became for them a source of wealth and well-being, and a part of their social activity was oriented toward the exploitation of this precious resource.

226 At the present time fishing and the preparation of salt are practically the only means of subsistence and unquestionably the principal occupations of all the riparian groups in the region of Leopoldville, Kwamouth, Lake Leopold II, and the lower Lukenie.

226 Among all the tribes of this region, we were able to distinguish
●258 clearly between the groups of the interior, whose chief occupation is hunting, and the riparian groups who prefer to fish and make salt.

Two clans arose in this fashion within a single ethnic group. They both belong to the large family known by the name of the tribe, and yet they are completely different in the habits, practices, and customs relating to that aspect of their lives.

226 During the dry season, one sees the natives from villages located two or three hours' march into the interior come to establish camps on the [89] river bank and to set up veritable fisheries. The information that follows applies to these groups and to all the peoples from Leopoldville to the sector of Tolo inclusively. The rivers, lakes, and marshes in this region are extremely well stocked with fish. As a matter of interest, we give here the list of some native names for fish noted by Mr. Bayens and used by the Bandzali of the Tolo region: kinkure mbieme, lepari, ignognienge, mpushu, lokanga, itike, mokonga, n'tombo, loana, sabere, lboie, moelo, n'ikulu, m'binga, pesule, m'butu, mondja, mahime, moekiki, lupungu, ompara, m'vunu, longelenzali, monkie, komoe, ikeke, koshoie, nokama, singa, n'guikemen, m'pio, mwiki, ekambela, lekumu, elangu, evuya, mekamo, m'beli, motume, idzore, kebale, kupu, molanja, kevuni, mopa lekeje, mipari.

Aside from fishing with dams, these different groups fish both individually and communally.

Individual fishing is done by the following methods.

1) Fishing with hook and line, angling. The hook is made of a very fine splint of false bamboo, folded back and held in the shape of a hook by a fine raffia fiber. This raffia fiber extends on to form the fishing line. It is attached to a splint of bamboo which serves as a float. The native does not keep watch over his line. He fastens the lines with the hooks on them to a rope of twisted fibers. The lines are spaced 30 to 50 centimeters apart. The rope is 10 to 15 meters long and is attached to a stick at either end. The native plants two stakes in the river bed. He attaches the two ends of the rope to them, taking care that it is stretched perpendicularly to the current. The lines with float and hook are uncoiled, the bait consisting of a pellet of

372 177 This last method has also been noted among the Balesa, and we were able to verify that some of the natives in the region were familiar with it and used it. It is not indigenous to this tribe, however, and must have been introduced into the region by soldiers or laborers from the old Tolo post, who came from regions where this method was known.

It is also possible that the eastern Yaelima borrowed this method from the peoples of the south, although we were unable to obtain any precise information on this point. This hypothesis, however, is justified by the fact that we found the friction and gyration methods in certain Yaelima villages, and the natives preferred to use the latter method in every such instance. It must be noted that the gyration method is not only less tiring but also faster and permits the natives to take turns. It provides a maximum of yield for a minimum of work. There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in the fact that wherever the natives have had an opportunity to observe the advantages of this method, they have made a point of adopting it.

372 In our opinion, the friction or longitudinal rubbing method should be regarded as having been used exclusively in former times by all the tribes, from the Banfumungu to the Yaelima. This method may still be found among the tribes of the Dekese region, but, unfortunately, we were unable to substantiate this.

All these peoples in this respect would belong to the same ethnic group, which is clearly differentiated from the group of tribes in the Bena Dibele-Kole region.

Salt

●258 The preparation of salt occupies an important place in the life of certain tribes of the Kasai-Lukenie region. Lacking both salt mines and salt water in their territory, the natives proceeded to obtain this precious condiment, indispensable to the diet, by extracting it from plants. [106]

Wherever the introduction of imported products has not eliminated the native method, the extraction of salt is a veritable national industry. The whole community participates in it.

[177] Among the Batsele, Banfumungu, Baboma, and part of the Wadia, the introduction of salt has completely eliminated the use and preparation of native salt.

MS 258

Among the Mosengere, Bobale, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobale, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

MS [94]

Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobale, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

MS [342]

They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

MS 258 423

In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

MS 257 Pl. 2

While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mongogere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the

Fig. 63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bahete.

furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally overheated and burns, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property.

Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mongwandi, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobale, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the women who own the salt.

1: Maes--82 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FOR2 Mongo FOR2
Sakata F093

[Ed., an example given by the author, from the third paragraph, page 111, through the fifth paragraph, page 114, is not translated.].

[114] This clearly shows that the proceeds from the sale of salt, the property of the woman, belong in equal shares to the husband and wife: to the woman because of her work, to the man because of his trouble and travel to put the product on sale.

Among the Wadia, Tumbe, Bobeie, Basakata, and Balesa, I had the opportunity to observe the same fact. As long as the woman herself goes to sell her part of the communally made salt, she keeps all the proceeds of the exchange, but according to

Fig. 64. [Evaporation of Water Saturated with Salt, among the Basakata.

native custom, when the husband is entrusted with the sale, he is entitled to part of the proceeds.

The proceeds, however, are not divided immediately after the sale. The total sum is put in a safe place, a hiding place known to both husband and wife. The couple accumulates the mitakos [Ed., a kind of metal currency]; they hoard them until the day when they both agree to divide them. Custom gives one quarter to the man and three quarters to the woman. [115]

This custom does not exist among the tribes east of the Balesa. Salt grass cannot be gathered there, because it is very sparse in the region. The cruits of bananas and palm trees and the

1: Mass--63 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FOSS Mongo FOSS

flowers of palm trees are not sufficiently abundant to permit exploitation on a large scale. The women scarcely manage to gather enough material to make the salt needed for everyday life. The whole village takes part in the harvest. The incineration and extraction of the salt is done in the village by the process we have just described, but the product is divided among all the families in proportion to the number of their respective members. The quantity available is usually so small that it is barely sufficient for daily needs; hence the value of salt here is notably higher than among the peoples of the regions where salt grow in abundance. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 115, to the end of the section, page 118.]

Fig. 66. Calebashes for Salt, Lake Leopold II.

Manioc may be regarded as the principal food, the dietary staple of all the peoples in the region visited.

From the Stanley of Leopoldville to the Equateurville of Beno Dibele-Kole, [119] all the tribes cultivate manioc, gather the tubers, soak them, and extract the flour with which they make chikwangue.